A DISCOURSE Upon the NATURE OF ETERNITY,

AND

The Condition of a Separated SOUL, according to the Grounds of Reason, and Principles of Christian Religion.

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

THE

PREFACE TO THE READER.

EMpedocles *of* Agrigentum, *being demanded, Why 'twas ſo hard to find out a wiſe man? gave this reaſon, Becauſe (ſaid he) none can find one out, who is not ſo himſelf: thereby inferring, that unleſs there be a proportion between the Object and the Power, it will never be able to produce the Effects flowing from it.*

Upon this ground it may be well concluded, that 'tis impoſſible for any to give a true Deſcription of Eternity, *who hath no ſubſiſtence but in Time; and certainly, although ſome Spirits (ſublimated by the daily Contemplation of Eternal things) may*

perhaps be able to ſhew us ſome imperfect Idea's *of thoſe perfect Beauties whereon they are enamoured; yet 'tis a meer extravagance in me (who have employed the beſt part of my time in queſt of tranſitory and fading things) to undertake the handling of a ſubject, which cannot be worthily expreſſed by leſs than an Angel, nor be conceived in this life by Humane kind.*

Whilſt Hannibal, *was with the King* Antiochus *in* Epheſus, *where they were buſied in making preparation for a War againſt the* Romans, *he was invited by ſome of the great Kings Favorites, to hear one* Phormio *a Philoſopher read a Lecture of Military Diſcipline, and the Duty of a General; and having performed it with the applauſe of all the Auditory,* Hannibal *being demanded his opinion of the man, anſwered, That he had indeed formerly ſeen divers mad men, but never any one ſo mad as* Phormio, *who having never viewed Troops on their march, never ſpent one night in the Trenches, or performed the leaſt Duty of a Souldier, would notwithſtanding take upon himſelf to order an*

Army

Army, and preſcribe Rules unto a General.

It is certainly much eaſier to comprehend all Military Knowledge, which is contained in the finite number of ſome Precepts drawn from Reaſon and experience, than fathom the bottomleſs Abyſs of ETERNITY, *which holds no proportion at all with the narrow limits and ſhallowneſs of Humane Reaſon; and conſequently to undertake the handling of this Subject, is a much greater madneſs than that of* Phormio.

This being ſo, I doubt not but there will be ſome, who, unſatisfied with what I ſhall ſet down, will queſtion upon what Grounds I have adventured to publiſh my Conceptions upon Eternity, *ſo many excellent Pens having already employed themſelves in the decyphering of it; and will conclude, that as his error is to be pitied, who, contrary to his expectation, fails (by the weakneſs of his forces) to perform what he hath undertaken; ſo his madneſs is inexcuſable, who undertakes what himſelf knows is not to be performed. I will not go about to juſtifie my ſelf againſt their reprehenſions*

henſions, which perhaps have truth for their foundation: all I ſhall ſay is, I have written this only for my own private uſe, that I might at times of leiſure view the Diſcoveries I have made of that Country to which I tend; and on which, Time, at the ſhutting in of my Lives courſe, will land me: And I have publiſhed it, not as conceiving I could better what others have before written, but out of an opinion that my Conceits (though ſhort of what hath been delivered) might hit the Humor of ſome one or other, and waken him from that Lethargy, wherein the World holds the moſt part of men during their lives, that he may look about in time, and provide himſelf for that Eternal *Habitation. Thoſe who are ſtung with the* Tarantula, *cannot be cured but by Muſick, and I have heard, that 'tis not always the beſt Tunes help the diſeaſed Patients, but ſuch as (how extravagant ſoever) ſympathize moſt with their Inclinations.*

Reader! *Having given thee this account of my ſelf, I proceed briefly to ſet down the ſubſtance of this ſhort Treatiſe. In the firſt place, I ſhall endeavor to let thee know*

know what Eternity *is, in the ſecond, to deſcribe what our condition will be in it; and in the laſt place, to ſet down ſuch Rules as may (being obſerved) render us perfectly happy in that fixed condition wherein* Eternity *will place us. All I require of thee is, That if thou approve not what I write, thou wilt (at leaſt) approve the good will wherewith 'tis written.*

Farewel.

A

DISCOURSE

Upon the Nature of

Eternity, &c.

ONe of the Maximes wherein Philosophers (notwithstanding the many different Opinions among them) do accord, is this: *Nihil est in Intellectu, quod non prius fuit in Sensu.* That is, Nothing is in our Understanding, which hath not first gained its admittance through the Senses. Our Souls, during the time of their Imprisonment in our Bodies, seem to be so narrowly coopt up by our Senses, who guard all the Avenues by which any intelligence of the great Workmanships of Nature may be conveyed to them, that they get notice

of nothing ſave what is brought to them by their mediation.

Well may the exterior Objects (aſſiſted by the Suns light) fill the Air with the repreſentation of their ſeveral *ſpecies*; but the Underſtanding will not be able to know any thing either of their ſhape, or colour, unleſs they paſs thorow the Eye into the common Senſe, and be thence tranſmitted to the Fancy.

The Warbling Choriſters of the Air may well cauſe both the Woods and Valleys eccho with their melodious ſounds; and all the Famous Orators diſplay the utmoſt Charms of winning Rhetorick; but if our Ears deny them entrance to the Brain, they will at laſt die in the Air where they were formed, without giving us the leaſt Information either of their Harmony or Meaning.

All the rare Spices of the Eaſt may well evaporate themſelves to nothing before our Eyes, without leaving any other ſenſe of their rich Perfumes, but what our Smelling ſhall convey unto us. And if another Monarch far ſurpaſſing *Ahaſuerus* in the riches and extent of his Dominions, ſhould unpeople the three Elements to furniſh out a ſumptuous Feaſt, that might ſhew forth the greatneſs of his magnificence; we were not able to diſtinguiſh any of thoſe exquiſite Dain-

ties, and delicious Wines, farther than what our Tastes should dictate to us.

In fine, our Souls, notwithstanding their immaterial substance, and the faculties of Will and Understanding, whereby they think themselves equal to the Celestial Spirits, (were but those Gates dammed up whereof our Senses are the Porters) would (like the *Egyptians* during the three days darkness wherewith God plagued them) be forced to sit still; nor could the heavenly gifts of Reasoning and Resolving avail them ought towards the discovery of Truth or Goodness, which are the only Objects of their Functions.

The Spots we now discover in the Sun, the Valleys in the Moon, and Stars that move in an Epicycle about the Planet *Jupiter*, had been eternally concealed from all Mankind, had not the invention of *Galileus* Perspectives, by aiding the weakness of our Sight, discovered them unto our Eyes. And I am verily perswaded, that all those rare Effects of Nature which we now attribute to Sympathy, to Antipathy, or other occult Causes, are indeed only Material qualities, but too subtle to be perceived by our Senses: Which is the cause that all our rarest Wits are at a fault in quest of them, and pay us only with Obscure Terms in stead of Truth.

ETERNITY alone, is that can never

fall to be the object of our Senses; the Infinity of its Duration cannot be comprehended by their finite powers, and time doth hurry us away so fast over the Race of our Mortality, that we have not the leasure to contemplate its stable Firmness, nor subject to those Laws of Ruin by which Heaven and Earth shall one day perish. This Truth is excellently confirmed unto us by the Apostle, when he saith, that *neither eye hath seen, ear heard, nor hath it entred into the heart of Man, to conceive the excellencies of what God hath prepared in store for those that fear him.* ETERNITY is surely one of the most precious of all those Blessings; and the *Trisagion*, of Thrice-holy, so much renowned in the *Greek* Church, as a Hymn delivered to them by the mouthes of Angels, *Sanctus Deus, sanctus Fortis, sanctus Immortalis*, puts Immortality in the last place, as complement of the Divine perfections.

When *Moses*, moved with a holy Curiosity, desired he might behold the Face of God, he was answered, it was impossible to see that and live: All this beloved Patriarch could obtain, was license to view the glory of his hinder parts in passing by. And what is thereby meant, save only this: That we may be permitted here on Earth to contemplate the Divine Perfections in the Creatures, which are the last and meanest effects

of

of his Power, being produced during the continuance of fleeting Time; but that all ſolid Joys, together with his Beatifical Viſion, are reſerved only for ſuch as fix their habitations in the bleſt dwelling of ETERNITY.

8. *Paul*, being through ſpecial favour rapt into the third heaven, that he might take a taſte of thoſe Celeſtial pleaſures, thinks it not lawful to utter the *Arcana*, that is, the ſublime and hidden thing which he learned there. The greateſt height we can attain unto whilſt we are here, is to contemplate the Myſteries which ſhall be there revealed, *per Speculum in ænigmate*, through a Glaſs, in a dark Riddle. What is this Glaſs, but Faith, by whoſe aſſiſtance our faint Eyes are able without dazling to look upon the Sun of Truth, even God himſelf, and expound thoſe Riddles that paſs the reach of humane underſtanding.

Relying therefore upon this Guide, I ſhall begin to ſearch into the nature of ETERNITY, becauſe her Maximes are like a Clue of Thread let down from Heaven, to lead us with ſecurity and humbleneſs into the underſtanding of Divine Myſteries; that ſo we may not ſtray in the wild Maze of Self-opinion, wherein the greateſt part of humane kind do wander endleſly, and loſe themſelves at laſt, being intrapped in the pernicious

snares of over-weening Pride, or stupid Ignorance.

When the Divines endeavor to describe the Deity unto us, they make us of three sorts of Attributes; the First, as they call them, Negative; the Second, Relative; and the Third, Positive. The First, shew what he is not; and the Second, what he is in relation to us, or to some other being; but the Third, which should declare unto us what he is in Himself, fail to perform it, because all Terms explicate only our Conceptions, and we can conceive nothing but what is infinitely short of his Perfections. They call him *increated*, and *immortal*, that we may know his Essence is incompatible with whatsoever hath either Ending or Beginning: They term him *Creator*, and *Redeemer*, thereby informing us, that all the Blessings we enjoy here, or expect hereafter, are but dependencies upon his Power. But when they tell us of his Virtues, and of his Wisdom, they intend not that we should thereby understand such Virtues or such a Wisdom as are in us; not an affection or habit of his Will, inclining him to pursue always the dictates of a right Reason; nor a perspicacity of Judgment, enabling him to distinguish, upon all occasions, the real Truths from those that seem so; (which notwithstanding is the proper meaning of those Terms.)

Terms.) Whereas the Divine Virtues and Wiſdom are neither Qualities, nor Habits, but are the very Eſſence and Being of God himſelf, which cannot be known or comprehended by any other Nature inferior to him.

It being therefore admitted, that we can never write or conceive any thing worthily of the Divine Eſſence; how is it poſſible I ſhould be able to explicate the nature of ETERNITY, which is the Meaſure of his Duration, and one of the moſt excellent of all his Attributes? God himſelf ſeems to glory in it, when being asked his Name by the great Patriarch *Moſes*, he gives him only this deſcription of himſelf, *Ego ſum qui ſum*, I am he that I am, without mentioning either his Power, his Juſtice, or any of his other Attributes; giving us thereby to underſtand, that all his other Attributes depend upon his Being, (according to the Order of our Conceptions) as their Foundation: That other things have an exiſtence, whoſe Beginning flows from his Power, and whoſe Continuance is an effect only of his Will: That nothing hath a ſtable independent Being, ſave only he; and that, in me, no happineſs or perfection is to be prized, if the enjoyment of it be not ſecured unto us by ETERNITY.

This Measure of Gods Being, cannot (by any positive terms which we can use) be comprehended, or defined; nor can it be illustrated to humane understandings, by other means, than by considering the nature of it negatively, and comparatively unto those things which have a being, during the Continuance of time; the first of which considerations, shall be of the Infinity thereof; which (as I said before) is a term purely negative, and represents nothing at all unto our Imaginations; the only conception we can frame upon it, being of something not circumscribed by ends, or bounds, as are all the Objects which present themselves unto our Senses.

We are astonished, when we consider the vast extent of this habitable Earth, which hath sufficed to the production and nourishment of the innumerable number of Men now living, or that have had a being, since the Creation of the World; and we are notwithstanding satisfied, both by the demonstrations of Cosmographers, and relations of Navigators, that a full third part of it is yet undiscovered. The Immense quantity of Waters in the Ocean, seems to pose Arithmetick, to number all the several drops contained in it; but above all, the Heavens, incircling round this Ball made up of Earth, Water, and the other Elements, and exceeding

ing it ſo far in bigneſs, that all of it toge-
ther bears, in compariſon to them, but ſuch
proportion (according to the Aſtronomers
computation) as a point in the middle of a
Circle to the Circumference, doth with its
unmeaſurable greatneſs, out-vie the force of
humane underſtanding, to conceive any *Idea*
of its dimenſions; and yet when we conſider,
but with the leaſt attention, theſe great
workmanſhips of God, and ſearch into the
nature of them, we muſt needs be ſatisfied
they are not infinite; for that conſiſting (as
our ſenſes can inform us) of finite parts,
themſelves muſt likewiſe be of the ſame na-
ture with the parts whereof they are com-
poſed. Who is it that perceives not, when
he takes up a ſhovel-full of Earth from the
ground, or but a diſh of water out of the
Sea, that thoſe portions of theſe two Ele-
ments are finite; and that our not being
able to find out their certain quantity, pro-
ceeds not from any contradiction in their na-
tures, to be ſurveyed, or meaſured, but on-
ly from the weakneſs of our forces? who is
it that can doubt, when he perceives the
Sun draw nearer to us, but that the diſtance
between us and him is finite? ſince were it
otherwiſe, it were not capable of increaſe,
or diminution. And who, in fine, can make
a Queſtion but that the Heavens are Cir-
cumſcribed by certain bounds and limits,
when

when he beholds them to be perpetually meaſured by the Sun, Moon, and the other Planets, in their ſeveral motions, according to whoſe different races, we give beginning and ending unto our Hours, Days, Months, Years, and to our Ages.

Archimedes was of opinion he could have moved the World, had there been any other place out of it, upon which he might have fixed his Inſtrument; and I am certainly perſwaded, that when we ſhall be freed out of this Cage of Earth, wherein our Souls are encloſed during this life, we ſhall with eaſe be able to ſurvey and comprehend the Heavens, the Earth, and all the other workmanſhips of Nature, that now appear to be ſo far beyond the reach of humane underſtanding. And yet when our enlarged Souls ſhall have the power to circle Earth, ſound Hell, and meaſure all the vaſt extent of Heaven, how little, or rather nothing at all, will that appear, being compared unto Infinity? If we were able to number all the drops of water in the Sea, and count the ſands upon the ſhore, and if for every one of them we were to live an Age before we died, yet were this term as nothing, being compared unto Eternity, ſince Time would at laſt conſume all that large ſtock of our ſubſiſtance, and Eternity, when that were paſt, would ſtill continue

tinue conſtant in full poſſeſſion of all its being.

Ariſtotle was of opinion, the World wherein we live had no beginning, and ſhould never have an ending; perſwaded thereunto, by the inceſſant viciſſitude of generation and corruption, and the ſetled courſe of Nature, which perpetuates all the ſeveral Species, or kinds of things, notwithſtanding the continual decay of the individuals, whereof they are compoſed. If this imagination of his were true, it would then follow, that the duration of the World ſhould be indeed perpetual, but not Infinite; and that it would have nothing in it, appoaching to the pure ſimplicity of an eternal being: for if time be divided (as reaſon, experience, and the opinion of all Philoſophers, aſſure us 'tis) into part, preſent, and to come; how can that (though ne'r ſo far extended) be without end, whoſe every Being conſiſts in a perpetual flux of Ending and Beginning? or how can that be without bounds, whoſe two parts, that is, the Firſt and Laſt, are not at all; and whoſe Third part (wherein only it ſubſiſts) is circumſcribed within ſuch narrow limits, that we can hardly think a thought, during the terms of its duration? And what reſemblance can there be in it of Eternity? the one being in a continual motion, and the other in a conſtant quiet; the one perpetu-

ally

ally changing, and the order never subject to alteration; and the one, in fine, subsisting only in the short instants of the present time, whereas the other comprehends all time past, present, and to come, in the pure simplicity of a present being. From this Ground, there ariseth another consideration of the nature of Eternity, that is, of the indivisibility thereof; which I make the subject of my next Reflection.

Indivisibility is a term also Negative, which represents unto us only sometimes that cannot be parcelled out by portions, as the things of this inferiour world may be. *Divide & Impera*, that is, Divide and Govern, is a Maxime successfully practised by the Politicians, when making use of the private dissentions either of a City or a Common wealth, they obtain and preserve thereby their Dominion over all the differing Parties. And we may also with the same truth affirm this other, *Divide & Destrue*, Divide and Destroy. GOD, who is Creator of whatsoever hath an existence, being himself One by the simplicity of his nature, hath placed the subsistence of all things in Unity; and hath therefore, by a working peculiar only to himself, united the Contraries of Heat and Cold, of Drought and Moisture, unto the making up of all the several Bodies, either sensible or insensible, which are contained in

the

the rich Treasury of Nature. Whilst they continue united by this Bond, so long they are said to be; but if the Union be once broken, either by external violence, or the inward working of the different qualities whereof the Body is composed; then doth it forthwith loose the former being, and become some other thing, according to the nature of the new form which it acquires. As long as our bodies remain fit to entertain our Souls, by the due temperature of the humour, and disposition of the organs to receive her operations, we continue to be Men: but when that ceaseth, either by inward distemper, or outward force, we then leave to be so; our Souls becoming seperated forms, and our bodies returning to the common mass of Matter, from whence they are extracted. The same we see happen in Beasts, Plants, and in all other inanimate bodies, of what nature or quality soever: so as there can be no Conclusion truer than this. That whatsoever is already divided, hath left to be what it was formerly; whatsoever may be divided, is subject to decay and ruin; and whatsoever is indivisible, must also of necessity, by reason of the simplicity of its nature, be eternal.

ETERNITY is therefore indivisible; and all those happy Persons who have gained that Blessed Port, are always in possession of their whole being; they loose nothing of what

is past, they want nothing of what is future; but the present in that Celestial Country doth comprehend, after an unexpressible manner, all those Three different and incompatible parts, into which Time is divided. And hence it is, that all the happiness found there is true and solid, because those different Goods are united in that fixed Mansion, which being here divided, mislead the greatest part of Humane kind in that search they make after the Chiefest Good, and feed us only with appearances instead of truth.

Good is the simplest of all other Beings, and is therefore not to be looked for here, where nothing doth subsist but is compounded: And all those things which are so eagerly pursued by men, for the resemblance they have to Good, are but like Glo-worms, which cheat us as we wander in the Night, and casting forth a lustre equal to that of the most precious Gems, are in themselves nought else but Rottenness and Putrefaction.

We are divided almost into as many Opinions as Persons; and every one seeks Happiness (which is the chiefest Good) a several way, in the variety of their own Appetites; neglecting Eternity, which is the only place were it resides.

Some hunt after Power and Soveraign Command, expecting to find true Contentment in Authority. But alas! how infinite

ly are they mis-guided by Ambition. The Cares of Governing, and Dangers that accompany a Scepter, so far out-weigh the happiness found in it, that *Augustus Cæsar*, who enjoyed the Empire of the World in the most setled Times it ever saw, made it his daily suit unto the Senate, that he might be restored unto the Quiet of a private life And *Diocletian* having generously cast off the Yoke of Ruling others, refused to return again unto the Glorious Servitude; professing that he found more pleasure among the Cabbages growing in his solitary Garden, than Twenty years Command over the *Roman* Empire had yielded to him.

Others there are, whose thoughts are wholly taken up in gathering Wealth, as if that were the only thing to be desired; never considering, (so grossly are they blinded by their Covetousness) that the Content of Riches consists not in the hoording up of Treasures, but in the liberal distribution of them: that the sordid ways of gathering Money, renders them odious to others, and the restless care of keeping it, destroys the quiet they would establish in themselves: That their continual negotiation about Gain, hinders them from enjoying the happiness of life; and that, in fine, when they have reaped the plentiful Harvest of all their labours, they must resign it unto others, who longing to enjoy

joy the precious spoil, think their lives tedious, and their deaths welcome. I forbear to mention the infinite number of mischiefs which the possession of Riches hath brought upon the owners. How many are there, who (like *Seneca*) have in hoarding up treasures, been careful to get together their instruments of their own ruin? finding at last by experience, that to be the occasion of their deaths, wherein they had established the contentment of their lives. This is a truth so evidently certain, that not Philosophers only, and Votaries, have been able to discover the impostor of them, but even whole Nations have agreed upon it. The inhabitants of the *Balearick* Island, now called *Majorca* and *Minorca*, drowned all their Gold and Silver in the Ocean; and the *Spartans* (one of the most flourishing Commonwealths that ever were) banished those Metals out of the confines of their Territories; forbidding the enjoyment of them to all their Citizens, as being incompatible with true Contentment.

Some place their happiness in Pleasure; and shunning whatsoever hath the shew of Trouble, give themselves wholly up to Sensual delights. Fond fools! who blinded by their Bestial appetites, think themselves happy men in practising those actions, which deprive them of the dignity of being Reasonable

nable creatures, and cast them down into the rank of Beasts; unworthy of enjoying Souls made after the Divine likeness, since they employ their whole time in giving satisfaction to their Bodies. And yet how short are those few minutes of Contentment which they enjoy, whilst they abandon themselves to their Debauches, being compared to those of Trouble, which necessarily accompany the Pleasures they hunt after? The Drunkard will assure us, that the pain he suffers in his head and stomack, is of much longer continuance, than was the taste of that delicious Wine wherein he made a Shipwrack of his Reason. The Passion, whether feigned or real, which a Libidinous man acts or suffers for a desired Beauty, and the solicious endeavours used by him for obtaining of his Prey, far outweigh the momentany Pleasure he enjoys, which notwithstanding is attended with remorse of Conscience from within, and the apprehensions of Danger and Dishonor from abroad: Diseases (the effect of their Disorders) take up a setled quarter in their bodies, and render that the constant Mansion of grief and pain, where they intended to have given admittance unto nought but joy and pleasure: and for a complement of their misfortunes, their Vices, like a raging fire, consuming all those excellencies which God and Nature have bestowed upon them,

brand them with a perpetual Blot of Infamy to all poſterity, and fix an everlaſting Guilt upon their Souls.

Sampſon had a prodigious ſtrength, infinitly ſurpaſſing that of other men; ſeconded by an exceſs of Courage, which rendred him victorious over Lions, and Triumphant in the diſcomfiture of an Hoſt of men: his ſingle perſon was of more value than an Army: But when he ſuffered himſelf to be conducted by his Paſſion, the love of *Dalila* having firſt blindfolded his Reaſons eyes, deprived him after of his corporeal ſight, betrayed him to his enemies, and reduced him to ſo great a height of miſery, that to be freed from the contempt to which he was expoſed, he was conſtrained to employ his matchleſs Force, in working his revenge by his own ruine.

Sardanapalus (laſt of the *Aſſyrian* Monarchs) ſaw himſelf peaceably ſetled in the chief Empire of the World; but having once given himſelf over to his effeminate pleaſures, the fire of Luſt firſt kindled in his own heart, quickly deſtroyed the reſpect of him in the minds of Neighbour-Princes, and his own Subjects; and after taking hold on the magnificent Pile he had cauſed to be erected, reduced to aſhes both his perſon and his Empire.

Alexander (juſtly ſurnamed *the Great*, for his unparallel'd Courage, Conduct, and Fortune)

tune) was mounted to ſo great a height of Glory, that he deſpiſed the World, as a place too narrow to bound the limits of his Conqueſt; and yet the Murther of his friend *Clitus*, which he committed in his Drunkenneſs, rendred all theſe Proſperities ſo unſavoury to him, that he attempted the killing of himſelf; and begat ſuch an averſion againſt him in the minds of divers of his Subjects, that they prepared a Poyſon for him, which cutting ſhort the courſe of all his Victories, buried his Triumphs together with his carcaſe in the Grave.

Solomon received from God the gift of an incomparable Wiſdome, above all the men that ever were; and with it, a confluence of all thoſe Bleſſings which might raiſe Humane nature unto the greateſt height of Happineſs, whereof 'tis capable during this mortal life: but the inordinate love of Women, to which he was addicted in his latter time, deprived his Iſſue of the greater part of his Terreſtrial Kingdom, and himſelf, (as ſome do probably conjecture) of the Eternal Joys of Heaven.

Why ſhould I farther inſtance the ſingle puniſhments of Particular Voluptuous perſons? 'Tis ſo prodigious a madneſs for Man to place his Chiefeſt Good in Senſual luſt, that it hath drawn down Fire from Heaven for the conſuming of whole Cities, and water from the Earth and Firmament, which was

upon the point to have extirpated Mankinde; all the different Elements conspiring to revenge that insufferable wrong is done to their Creator, when we neglect his Image ingraven in our Souls, to satisfie the fleshly part of us, which is nothing else but dust and ashes.

And to conclude, even *Epicurus* the Philosopher, who placed the Chiefest good of Man in pleasure, did notwithstanding (if we believe *Seneca*, rather than some others who have slandred him) esteem that Pleasure to consist i'th' Golden Mean of Temperance, and not in the exorbitant use of Wine, of Play, of Gluttony and Women.

I have exceeded in handling this Particular, the brevity I had proposed unto my self; because these are the Meteors, which by the glittering brightness of their deceitful light, dazle the eyes of our unwary Youth, and like so many Wandring Fires, mislead us in our search for Happiness, through the blind paths of ignorance and Folly, until at last they train us into the dangerous Precipices of Wickedness and Infamy, from whence we are not able (without particular assistance of the Divine grace) to free our selves, for all Eternity!

All other things so greedily grasped at by Worldly Men, may be reduced unto the before-mentioned Heads, of Power, of Riches,

and of Pleasure. Nobility, Fame, and Respect, are the Attendants upon Power; Sufficiency and Plenty wait upon Riches; Health, Strength, and Beauty, are necessarily required to the compleating of our Pleasures. And therefore what false appearance soever of Happiness they may hold forth to our deluded minds, they cannot possibly give us that true Content, which is not to be found in these principal things, whereunto they are but Accessories.

Power, Riches, Pleasure, and the rest, have indeed some resemblance of good, but are not that which they resemble; for good, or happiness (being the same) consists not in possessing many different things, but in the union of all together; whereas they are so far from being one, that they are inconsistent with each other.

The weight of business, and distance kept by Soveraign Princes, for maintaining the Reverence due to their Calling, permits them not the sweet delights of Pleasure, to which the freedom of Equality is requisite; and the vastness of their Expence, in Wars, in Treaties, for Intelligence, and other things incident to their Authority, makes them the neediest almost of all other Men. The wary Closeness of the Rich Miser (inconsistent with Popularity) hinders him from being Powerful; and his daily employment about the in-

creaſing of his Store, debars him from the uſe of Pleaſure, which cannot be had without the expence of Time and Money. The ſeriouſneſs of Great affairs diſturbs the quietneſs of Pleaſures, and the prodigality of Luxury waſtes the Eſtates of thoſe that are addicted to it.

In fine, which way ſoever we turn our ſelves, to ſeek Contentment in ſatisfaction of our Luſtful Appetites, theſe divided goods, which cannot dwell together in one Subject, fruſtrate our Expectations, and enforce us to confeſs with the Wiſe-man, That whatſoever hath a being during the Continuance of Time, *is Vanity of Vanities, and nought but Vanity.* For if by a particular Indulgence of God and Nature, theſe divided (and as I have already ſhewed) incompatible Bleſſings of Power, Riches, Pleaſure, Reſpect, Nobility, Fame, Beauty, Health and Strength, ſhould fall to be the portion of one Man; what were all theſe advantages, without ſecurity in the Enjoyment of them, but vanity, and meer vexation of our ſpirits? and what ſecurity can this life poſſibly afford, amid the daily apprehenſions of being deprived of them before we die, and certainly to loſe them when we deſcend into the Grave?

Our Bleſſed Saviour therefore adviſeth *Martha* not to divide her thoughts, in the ſolicitous queſt of many things, ſince what

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was neceſſary was only One: and that we might not be to ſeek what that one, ſingle, neceſſary thing ſhould be, himſelf informs us in another place what 'tis, when he commands us to ſeek firſt the Kingdom of Heaven by juſt and righteous actions; which being once obtained, we ſhall enjoy all other bleſſings as coeſſential with it.

Is Power the object of thy Wiſhes? Thou ſhalt be there (as the Apoſtle aſſures) co-heir with him, to whom all power in Heaven and Earth is given. Is Honor or Command thy chiefeſt Good? It is ſo liberally diſpenſed to all the inhabitants of ETERNITY, that the Prophet *David* ſeems to charge God with prodigality in that particular, when he cries out, *Nimis honorati ſunt amici tui, Deus; nimis confortatus eſt principatus eorum!* My God, thy friends are too much honored, their Principality is too much ſtrengthned, or eſtabliſhed! Doſt thou deſire Fame or Riches? behold, the ſame Prophet telleth thee, *Gloria & divitiæ in domo Domini*, Glory and Riches are in the houſe of God. Art thou delighted with the magnificence of Royal Feaſts? The King of Kings hath by his only Son ſent down from Heaven, invited all Mankind to a delicious Banquet in his Eternal Palace, where having ſeated all the gueſts that come upon his invitation, according to their ſeveral degrees, himſelf will miniſter

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unto them. Is thy heart raviſhed at the ſight of ſome accompliſhed Beauty? Thoſe who reſide in that Eternal manſion, out-ſhine the Sun in greateſt height of all his glory.

In fine, whatever elſe it is that doth delight thee, ſhall there be preſent, becauſe all thy ſouls faculties, which can find nothing in this inferior World but is too mean and narrow for them, ſhall there be fully ſatisfied, according to the large extent of all their powers, being abſorp't in contemplation of the firſt Truth, and the enjoyment of the chiefeſt good; and yet all this ſhall be, not by the various diverſity of ſeveral objects, but by their bleſſed admiſſion to the preſence of God himſelf, who being the Firſt cauſe, contains eminently the perfection of all other beings, in the ſimplicity of his own nature, communicating freely all his excellencies to thoſe happy perſons, who are made partakers with him in the infinite and indiviſible Eternity.

Having conſidered the vaſt diverſity there is between Eternity and Time, by reaſon of the infinity of the one, and the ſtraight limits wherein the other is ſhut up and circumſcribed; the entire firmneſs of the one, and the minute parts whereinto the other is divided: It follows that we ſhould raiſe our thoughts unto the contemplation of thoſe excellencies which an Eternal Being hath, by the comparing

ing of it unto that which we enjoy during the ſucceſſion of Time.

Thoſe who employ themſelves in queſt of that, which we call vulgarly *The Philoſophers Stone*, have not as yet found out the way of fixing *Mercury*; which is the cauſe they fail in their attemps of making Gold, notwithſtanding the many laborious and chargable experiments have been uſed for the effecting of it. And all that have endeavoured to eſtabliſh their Contentment in the periſhable goods of this inferior World, have found themſelves deluded by their hopes, becauſe they were not able to fix the fleeting inſtants of the preſent time, whoſe continual motion is, of all other things, moſt deſtructive unto the happineſs of life.

What an uncomfortable Voyage would that man have, who were bound out in queſt of ſome particular Wave, i'th' midſt of the *Atlantick* Ocean! how improbable that he ſhould make diſcovery of what he ſought for! And how impoſſible to ſettle there, conſidering the perpetual agitation of the waters, in that reſtleſs Element! And yet ſuch is the fatal blindneſs which poſſeſſeth the greateſt part of humane kind, that we conſume our lives in ſeeking to find out a parmanent bliſs amid the various diverſity of worldly things; though all predeceſſors for above fifty Ages paſt, who have preceded us in that deſign,

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have periſhed in it, without being able to inform us any thing, ſave only this, that they have met with nothing in their ſeveral wanderings but Vanity, nor reaped ought but the Vexation of their ſpirits; and that Times courſe (as certain, tho not ſo rapid as that of the Ocean) faileth not to raviſh from us all thoſe pleaſing objects, in the purſuit of which we entertain our lives, and fancy in the obtaining of them a Contentment, which is no where to be found, but in the happy Region of ETERNITY.

That harmleſs Innocence which is the precious treaſure of our Childhood, is violently ſnatched from us by the heat of Youth, that inconſiderately engageth us to ſeek Contentment in ſatisfaction of our Luſtful Appetites; and when the acceſs of years and judgment at Mans eſtate, hath made us ſee the vanity of that employment, Ambition, Pride and Covetouſneſs preſent us with the ſpecious Baits of Honor, Power, and Riches, and train us by thoſe ſweet allurements from contemplation of ETERNITY, to employ the ſtrength and vigor of our age in purchaſe of them, as if they could beſtow true happineſs on their poſſeſſors; until at laſt (if death prevent us not before) we find our ſelves arrived at the utmoſt period of life (Old-age) where tho experience diſcover to us the true nature of all thoſe tranſitory things we firſt ad-

admired, yet we can reap no other fruit of all her Counſels, but only Sorrow and Deſpair, when we conſider the groſsneſs of our errors and miſcarriages in the time paſt, and the impoſſibility of amending them in that to come.

And hence it is the Royal Prophet *David* takes occaſion to reproach Mankind of dulneſs and heavineſs of heart, that quitting the only neceſſary thought and ſtudy of Eternity, give themſelves over unto the love of vanity, and the purſuit of lies: *Filii hominum, uſquequo gravi corde, ut quid diligitis vanitatem, & quæritis mendacium* ? As who ſhould ſay, You ſons of men, how long will you permit your hearts and your affections to be weighed down by the inordinate ſolicitude for earthly things? *Behold, the Pleaſures which you love and court for ſatisfaction of your Youth, are only vanity; and thoſe more ſolid employments you ſearch after for the entertainment of your Elder years, are but a lie; promiſing Contentment, and giving nought but Care, Vexation, and Repentance.*

If *Julius Cæſar* could have foreſeen that all his Victories and Triumphs whereby he ſubjected unto himſelf the *Roman* State, (that proud Miſtreſs of the then-known world) would but have ſerved to make him fall a glorious Victime in the Senate-houſe; he had not proſecuted certainly with ſo much ardour

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as he did, the cutting off all thoſe, who oppoſed themſelves to the accompliſhment of his ambitious deſignes. King *Pyrrhus* had ſure followed the counſel of his friend, and betaken himſelf unto the quiet pleaſures of a peaceful life, had he been well informed that all his thoughts of Conqueſts, and the enlargment of his Empire, ſhould periſh together with himſelf, by the hands of a weak Woman, in the attempt he made to ſurprize the Citie *Argos*. *Saladine* (that great Victorious Sultan of the Eaſt) would not have ſpent his life amid the toyl and dangers that attend a Martial employment, had he but thought at firſt, as he did afterwards, at the hour of death, that he ſhould carry nothing of all the Spoiles and Riches he had gotten away with him, but only a poor Shirt to ſhroud his carcaſe. The Rich man in the Goſpel would not have joyed in his full Barns and Storehouſes ſufficient for the expence of many years, had he but known that he ſhould never live to ſee the birth of the ſucceeding morn.

In fine, the buſineſs of the World would ceaſe, and we ſhould look with horrour and averſion upon thoſe gilded follies, and pleaſing vanities, in queſt whereof we ſpend our lives, diſturb the elements, and alter the whole frame of Nature, were but their Mask pulled off, and we made ſenſible of that which is con-

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firmed unto us by the experience of all our predeceſſors, to wit, that there is nothing in this inferior world can give a ſatisfaction to our ſoul, whoſe frame is equal unto that of the Celeſtial ſpirits: and that, although (by an exceſs of Beſtiality) we could ſo plunge our ſouls into the maſs of our terreſtrial Bodies, as to ſet up our reſts upon the enjoyment of thoſe things which are the object of our Senſes; yet Age and Sickneſs would, like unbidden gueſts, trouble the mirth of all our Entertainments, and Time (the abſolute Commander of all Sublunary things) conſuming by degrees the matter of them, would violently ſnatch us from their embraces, and put in execution that irrevocable Decree pronounced by God againſt material things, to wit, That whatſoever is compoſed of duſt and aſhes, ſhall again return unto it.

So that if We examine the true cauſe of things, we muſt conclude, that the ill conduct of our lives, and all the miſeries, vices and diſorders that flow from thence, are an effect of the continual motion of Time; which repreſenting unto us theſe exterior objects, under ſeveral diſguiſes, keeps us from penetrating into the true nature of them; and ſuggeſting to our deluded minds, vain hopes and fears, doth by thoſe falſe alarms diſturb our Reaſon, and brings upon us a forgetfulneſs of what is paſt, a miſtake of what is

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preſent, and a groſs negligence, in not providing of our ſelves for what's to come.

For remedy hereof, Antiquity was uſed to ſet up Trophies and Monuments of all great and vertuous actions, as alſo to expoſe the bodies of Malefactors who were executed, unto the publick view on Poles, or Gibbets, that ſo poſterity being put in mind of what had paſt, might be invited to imitate the one, and avoid the other. King *Philip* (father of the Great *Alexander*) gave command unto a Page of his, to wake him daily with this Admonition, That he ſhould call to minde he was a Man; fearing leſt he might otherwiſe be ſo far forth tranſported by the falſe luſtre of his Greatneſs and Proſperities, as to miſtake (which his Son after did) what himſelf was, and forget the condition of Humanity, wherein he had been placed by God and Nature. And (the great Doctor of the Church) S. *Jerome*, thinks it a matter of that conſequence for us to employ our ſelves in the conſideration of what is future, that he aſſures us confidently (by warrant of the ſacred Scripture) we ſhould never ſin, did we but carefully ruminate on the laſt things that do attend us: *Memorare noviſſima tua, & in æternum non peccabis.*

See here the true condition of our being during the ſucceſſion of Time. Let us now alter the Scene, and from this Theatre of Con-

Confuſion and Diſorder, raiſe up our thoughts unto the Contemplation of ETERNITY. It is an Inſtant always preſent, never decaying; whoſe Infinity comprehends all Times, paſt, preſent, and to come; and whoſe Simplicity preſenting us at once with whatſoever can be good or perfect, united in their Firſt Cauſe, (*the Divine Nature*) whereof (unleſs our ſins debar us from his ſight) we ſhall be then made glad beholders, clears up the foggy Miſts of Ignorance, of Forgetfulneſs, and of miſtake, which hang between our Underſtandings, and the truth of things; fills all the powers and faculties of our Souls, with the enjoyment of their deſired objects, and doth eſtabliſh us in the ſecure poſſeſſion of our bliſs, beyond the reach of Fortune, or of Time, which ſhall not there have power to traverſe our Contentments, with the deſire of ought that's paſt, or the apprehenſion of ought to come.

When we have once maturely weighed theſe ſolid Truths we ſhall begin to loath this Priſon of our bodies, ſubject to the perpetual injuries of Time, and Death; and ſhall cry out with the Apoſtle: *Infelix ego homo, quis me liberabit de corpore mortis hujus?* Unhappy man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from this body which belongs to death? And with the ſame Apoſtle, fixing all our affections and thoughts upon ETERNITY, we ſhall continually

tinually deſire to be diſſolved, that we may live with Chriſt in his Eternal habitation. And we ſhall receive the Summons to diſlodge hence, brought us by Age, Diſeaſes, War, Famine, Peſtilence, ar any other Officer of Time, clad in the hideouſeſt dreſs that Death can wear; we ſhall with joy prepare our ſelves unto the journey, and with the Prophet *David* ſay, *Lætatus ſum in his quæ dicta ſunt mihi, In domum Domini ibimus*: I am rejoyced in that which hath been ſaid unto me, We will go into the houſe of God.

It Seems (being a man according unto Gods own heart) he had well ſtudied the nature of that Celeſtial manſion, whoſe qualities he doth ſo excellently deſcribe in the two following verſes: *Stantes erant pedes noſtri in atriis tuis Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem quæ ædificatur ut civitas, cujus partic patio ejus in idipſum*: Our feet were ſtanding in thy courts, *Jeruſalem*. Here, they are running, forced to accompany the motion of Time; but they ſhall there be fixed in an eternal reſt, never to be diſturbed by Time or Fortune. *Jeruſalem* that is builded as a City, whoſe portion conſiſteth in the thing it ſelf. All other places are but Inns, where we are entertained as paſſengers during our Pilgrimage, and therefore have their buildings ſubject (as are thoſe they harbour) unto decay and ruine: but this City being the permanent place of our abode, hath its founda-

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tion laid upon the never-fading Baſis of ETERNITY. And if you ask, What is the ſtock or treaſure of the inhabitants in that bleſſed Country? He forthwith tells us that their portion conſiſteth in the thing it ſelf. What is the thing it ſelf? but that which is without dependance upon any other. And what is that? but he who being to declare himſelf unto the Patriarch *Moſes*, ſaith, *He is, he that is*; even God himſelf, in whom is comprehended the fulneſs of all Being, and without whom is nothing, but the privation of Good and Happineſs.

Let us endeavor then ſo to comport our ſelves, that we be not engaged amid theſe fading tranſitory things, but may be able to to ſay with the Apoſtle, *Our life is laid up with Chriſt in God.* And let our only Traffick and Negotiation be, to hoord up treaſures (according to the Council of our bleſſed Lord and Saviour) where neither ruſt nor moths can come to waſt them, nor thieves break in to ſteal them from us. We need not be to ſeek where that ſhould be, ſince he informs us that 'tis in Heaven, the only proper ſeat and manſion of ETERNITY.

In the preceding diſcourſe I have endeavored to deſcribe (although imperfectly) the nature and condition of Eternity, Which is the true and proper habitation of our ſouls, who have no commerce with Time, but only by

their union with our bodies: a bleſſed Country, but ſuch a one as doth not equally agree with all Conſtitutions: to ſome, it is an Ocean of pleaſure, reſt, and happineſs; to others, an Abyſs of everlaſting horror, trouble and confuſion. The reaſon of which difference proceeds from the diverſity of thoſe ſeveral diſpoſitions and affections we carry with us at our parting hence. For the clear underſtanding whereof, it is neceſſary that we conſider the nature of our ſouls, and examine what are thoſe things which ſubſiſt in and together with them, after the diſſolution of our bodies.

The Heathen Philoſophes, guided only by the light of Nature, did (ſome of them) believe the ſoul of Man to be immortal: they perceived well, that ſhe was capable of many operations, even in this life, without the mediation of the body: that ſhe gave a being within her ſelf, unto an infinite number of things, abſtracted from the ſeveral notions of time, place, figure, or any other property incident unto material things; which kind of being, becauſe it ſorted not unto the things themſelves in their own nature, they muſt neceſſarily receive from her: and they did thence infer, that ſhe could not communicate ſuch a being unto them, unleſs ſhe had an immaterial being in her ſelf: they ſaw the act of Judging was an action purely her own, whereby

whereby ſhe produced ſeveral Concluſions (which are new Beings) out of thoſe Premiſes that preſent themſelves to our Imaginations. And knowing the infallibility of this Argument, *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, That of nothing there comes nothing; they were fully ſatisfied the Soul had a being independent of the body; ſince it was able to communicate a being unto other things, without the help of any Organs which depend upon her.

From the aſſurance of her Being, they collected alſo her Immortality; for having by the ſtrict obſervation of all natural cauſes, found out that nothing whatſoever could loſe its former being, and acquire a new one, (which we term Death in living creatures) but by Diviſion; and that ſame could happen but two ways, *viz.* either by dividing the matter from the form, or by dividing the matter within it ſelf; they inferred thence, that ſince both theſe ways were incompatible with the Soul, ſhe was not capable of a real Change, and conſequently not of Death, (which of all others is the greateſt.) Not the firſt, becauſe that ſhe is immaterial; nor the ſecond, becauſe ſhe is a pure form, and that all forms are by their being ſo, incapable of diviſion, of increaſe, or diminution, according unto theſe two Maxims among them, *Forma non ſuſcipit majus & minus*; and this other, *in indiviſibili non fit mutatio.*

Upon the ſame Grounds alſo they inferred, that all the Reſolutions or Judgments, and all thoſe Sciences and Arts, whether Speculative or Practick, which are in the ſoul during this life, ſhall remain alſo in her after-ſeparation from the Body; theſe being things which depend only on her, and which are (in a kind) part of her ſelf, ſo as without them ſhe would loſe ſomething of the perfection of her Being.

And to conclude, becauſe they ſaw nothing among all the works of Nature, which did not at ſome time or other (unleſs 'twere hindered by exterior cauſes) attain unto a fulneſs and maturity, whereby it was enabled to reach that end for which it was ordained; and found the Reaſonable ſoul alone, which hath for the object of her Underſtanding the truth of all Natural cauſes, and their effects, was not able at any time during this life, wherein ſhe is united with the body, to comprehend the utmoſt truth may be diſcovered in any Art or Science whatſoever: they thence inferred, that ſhe was to enjoy a Being after the diſſolution of the body, wherein ſhe might at freedom exerciſe the power of Reaſoning wherewith ſhe is endued, and not only retain thoſe Sciences ſhe hath acquired here, but alſo be able to conceive all other Truth and Knowledge whatſoever, which may be deduced out of them, by that concatenation and deper-

dependance which the verity of one Propoſition hath upon that of another.

I have delivered theſe ſpeculations of the Philoſophers with this brevity, without ſetting down the many Arguments uſed by them for proof of their Aſſertions, and Anſwer of the Objections have been framed in oppoſition to them, (wherewith whole Volumes might be filled) becauſe they have been ſince, the moſt part of them, confimed unto us by the Tenets of Chriſtian Religion; the truth whereof (being revealed by God himſelf) is not to be diſputed by Mankind. And I have taken this ſhort view of the condition of Our Souls only to this intent, that in the ſequel of the enſuing Diſcourſe, we may upon theſe Grounds be able the better to diſcover how far the ordinary working of Natural cauſes doth co-operate with the Divine juſtice, in the Reward of Vertuous, and the Puniſhment of Vitious perſons.

For the clear underſtanding whereof, we muſt know, that all living Creatures whatoever (except Man) being deſtitute of Reaſon, ſuffer themſelves without repugnancy to be directed by the Rules of Nature, (that is, the ordinary power uſed by God in governing the World) which doth ſweetly guide them to the performance of thoſe actions, and the obtaining of that end, whereunto they are ordained. But Man (whoſe portion is a Rea-

ſonable ſoul) aſſumes the Conduct of himſelf, and blinded by Self-love, or over-weening Pride, forſake the general end of other things, (which is the honor and glory of their Maker) to purſue his own particular Good, and follow the inordinate affections of his own Corrupted nature. The true cauſe of which Miſtake, is this that follows.

Thoſe who have curiouſly ſearched into the compoſition of Man, obſerve, that he may be conſidered in a triple capacity; according unto every one of which, he hath a ſeveral Good that he propoſeth unto himſelf, and endeavoureth to attain unto during this life. The firſt is, as he is a living creature, compoſed of a material body, and a form that doth communicate unto it life and motion. The ſecond, as he is endued with a Reaſonable ſoul, capable of Diſcourſe and Knowledge, participating thereby of the nature of Intellectual ſpirits; which placeth him in a rank above all the material creatures of this inferior World. And the third, as he is the Workmanſhip of God, created by him out of nothing, after his own likeneſs; that he might ſerve him with obedience and perſeverance, during his temporal being, and be the witneſs and partaker of his glory in ETERNITY. The Chiefeſt good of Man, according to the firſt, are Riches, and corporal Pleaſures, called by the Apoſtles *Concupiſcentia carnis*

carnis & oculorum, Concupiſcence of the fleſh and eyes. According to the ſecond, the vanity of humane Knowledge, accompanyed with the forgetfulneſs of God; or the ambitious deſire of obtaining Power, Honor and Command, called by the ſame Apoſtle *Superbia vitæ*, Pride of life. Thoſe who conſider him according to the third capacity, eſteem their Chiefeſt Good to conſiſt in the uniting of their wills with God, and in procuring the advancement of his glorious Name.

Now the vaſt diſtance there is between theſe ends which men propoſe unto themſelves, cauſeth the great diverſity we ſee daily between them in the direction and conduct of their lives; each one deſiring to obtain the object of his Wiſhes, by actions ſuitable unto it: thoſe of the firſt rank abandoning themſelves to ſenſual luſts, forget the dignity of Humane nature, and abaſe themſelves down to the rank of Beaſts. Thoſe of the ſecond, denying to acknowledge him from whom they have received all thoſe advantages wherein they glory, imitate the devils in their pride, ingratitude, and rebellion againſt their Maker. Thoſe only the third rank, entring into the true knowledge of themſelves, and of the end for which they were created, ſubmit their wills unto Almighty God; and endeavoring to imitate the Angels in their prompt obedience, make themſelves,

during this life, fit to enjoy their ſociety after the diſſolution of their bodies.

From the great contrariety of mens Judgments, Reſolutions, and of the actions and habits that flow from, and are acquired by them, ariſeth the different condition of our ſouls when they are ſeparated from our bodies. The Coral we ſee daily, grows in the Sea; and I have read, that being under water, it may (by reaſon of its ſoftneſs) be moulded into any ſhape or figure whatſoever; but being once expoſed unto the open air, it forthwith hardens, and is no more capable of change and alteration. The like happeneth unto our Souls, who while they do continue in this Sea o'th' world, are ſuſceptable of the different affections of Good and Bad, according to the ſeveral appearances of things, which working on our Fancies, incline our Wills unto the following or forſaking of them: but having once finiſhed their voyage here, muſt always wear the dreſs of thoſe affections they have at parting hence, and reap their Harveſt in Eternity, ſuitable unto the Seeds they have ſowed here; according to that ſaying of the Apoſtle: *Quæcunq; ſeminaverit homo, eadem & metet*, Whatſoever a man hath ſowed, the ſame alſo he ſhall reap.

Let us examine the condition of one who hath abandoned himſelf unto his ſenſual luſts, and placing his Chief good in them, hath employed

ployed all the affections and faculties of his Soul, in compaſſing thoſe objects of his wiſhes; his ſtock of time is now exhauſted, whilſt he endeavored only to beguile it with the variety of choice delights; and Death finding him buſie in the careſſing of his body, hath violently ſnatched it from him. The ſtately Palaces, vaſt Treaſures, and raviſhing Beauties, whereof he thought himſelf the owner, are now in the poſſeſſion of another; and the poor Soul is expoſed naked, upon the confines of ETERNITY. Let us with the eyes of Contemplation accompany her thither, and ſee what are her thoughts, what are her entertainments in that Country, wherein as yet ſhe is a ſtranger. This rude Alarm hath rouzed her now out of that pleaſing ſlumber wherein ſhe wretchleſly conſumed the time alotted her to labor, and ſhe is come unto the land of reſt, wherein ſhe muſt for all ETERNITY ſubſiſt upon the Stock ſhe hath brought with her. She now begins to take a view thereof; and ſumming her Accounts, ſhe finds, that all her large Poſſeſſions, ſumptuous Buildings, Friends, and Riches, have parted with her at the hour of Death; that all her Pleaſures are vaniſhed like a dream; that her Body, for whoſe ſolace and delight all theſe were coveted, is mouldring into duſt and aſhes; and that, in fine, of all that ſhe hath done, of all that ſhe

hath

hath ſeen, ſuffered, or enjoyed, there remains nothing with her, but her own inordinate judgments and affections, which like a raging fire burn her without conſuming, whilſt all her powers and faculties are racked inceſſantly; when ſhe conſiders the excellency of what ſhe hath forgone, the unworthineſs of what ſhe hath purſued, and the impoſſibility to retract her choice.

All that which a moſt violent paſſion is able to produce in the moſt capable ſubject, is nothing, in compariſon of her afflictions. We read that *Pompey's* Wife (ſhe who was Daughter unto *Julius Caſar*) died ſuddenly with the exceſs of grief cauſed by the love ſhe bare unto her Husband, upon the ſight but of a bloody garment which ſhe knew had been that day worn by him: And if we may believe the Poets, that ſame Paſſion drew *Orpheus* to Hell, among the Ghoſts and Fiends, in ſearch of his *Euridice*, as being company much more ſupportable unto him, than were his Cares and Sorrows occaſioned by her abſence. But alas! what compariſon is there between the cauſe of their afflictions? They ſorrowed for their ſeparation from thoſe they loved but for a time, as being well aſſured, that altho time would not reſtore life to thoſe had loſt it; yet he would certainly unite them to their loves, by giving death to thoſe that ſought it: whereas ETERNITY

NITY, (tho infinite and boundleſs) cannot in all the vaſtneſs of its extenſion, furniſh this Soul with the leaſt ray of hope, that ſhe ſhall meet again with thoſe deceitful pleaſures wherein ſhe had eſtabliſhed her Contentment.

The miſeries we ſuffer during our union with our bodies, have ever with them this double Comfort, *viz.* that either they themſelves will change their nature, or we change our opinions touching the nature of them. The courſe of things we ſee is variable; and we may probably imagine, that as our Joys have paſſed, ſo alſo will thoſe things that do afflict us; or elſe, that the acquaintance we ſhall make with miſery, will in time ſo far alter the nature thereof, that we ſhall be no longer troubled at it. The ſtrongeſt Poyſons do, in tract of time, become natural Food to thoſe that are accuſtomed to them: as heretofore, we read, it happened unto that King, from whom we have the name and uſe of *Mithridate*. Whereas the miſeries of an Eternal condition can never receive eaſe by any alteration, either in the things themſelves, or in the minds of thoſe that ſuffer them; becauſe Eternity is nothing elſe but a fixed inſtant, always permanent; and Time is ſo eſſentially neceſſary unto Change, that it cannot be wrought but by its means; according to the before-recited Maxime, *In inſtanti non fit mutatio.* The

The Torment which *Mezentius* (mentioned by *Virgil* in his *Æneids*) uſed to his Captives, hath ſome imperfect weak reſemblance of this poor ſouls condition. That Tyrant uſed to faſten them unto dead bodies, joyning their hands, their feet, their mouthes, their eyes, and all their other parts, with thoſe of puttid carcaſes. Let us conſider what were the thoughts of thoſe poor miſerable Wretches, who tho living in themſelves, were by this union hindred from exerciſing any the actions of life; and notwithſtanding their natural averſion from ſtench, from rottenneſs, and from corruption, were yet forced to converſe only with them; exchanging all the happineſs of life, to entertain thoſe diſmal objects, which preſented them with nought but ghaſtlineſs and terror.

That unto which thoſe Wretches were compelled by outward violence, is an imperfect repreſentation of what happens to this ſoul by her depraved habits and affections. She hath made choice of bodily delights and pleaſures, as her chiefeſt good: ſhe hath employed, during her life, the faculty of her Underſtanding in the contemplating, and that of her Will in the enjoyment of them. The often reiteration of theſe acts and judgments, have powerfully imprinted them within her; and being thus diſ-

poſed,

poſed, her temporal union with the body hath been diſſolved, and ſhe's become a dweller in ETERNITY, where (as I have already ſhewed) ſhe is not capable of alteration. She very well perceives the baſe unworthineſs and vanity of thoſe delights, and the impoſſibility of ever coming to enjoy them; but cannot quit her inclinations to them; which not permitting her to exerciſe her faculties on objects worthy her ſelf, fill her with notions of earthly, and corruptible things; whereon (beginning to be now ſenſible of her own natural perfections) ſhe cannot caſt a thought, but doth repleniſh her with horrour, with confuſion, and affrightment.

The condition of a Soul puffed up with the pride of humane Knowledge, or the ambitious deſire of Power and Command, after her ſeparation from the body, is yet much more deplorable than that of the other. The failings of the one, have proceeded from a groſs ignorance of the true Good was to be followed, and from a ſoft complidnce with the Body; whereas this other hath offended out of Malice, and Contempt of the Firſt Cauſe, from whom ſhe hath received her being; the one is to be looked on as a Traytor and a Rebel, who hath attemped to invade the rights of her Creator, and endeavored to finde out a Wiſdom, and eſtabliſh a Power, which ſhould be independent of him, Their

Paſſions

Paſſions are proportionable unto the Cauſes from whence they ſpring; ſo as if the one give her ſelf over to the weak Paſſions of Grief and Lamentation, this other falling from the height of her ambitious pretences, muſt needs abandon her ſelf unto Deſpair, to Rage, and Furv. She hath been ſo far blinded during this life by the opinion of her own wiſdom and ſufficiency, or dazled with the falſe luſtre of her dignities and power, that ſhe refuſed to ſtoop to the Divinity, and acknowledge him the only giver of them: ſhe hath therefore propoſed her ſelf unto her ſelf, as the main End of all her actions; and having thus eſtabliſhed a Chief Good oppoſite unto that of all the other creatures, and ſetled in her ſelf the notions and affections thereof, ſhe hath been ſeparated from the body; when coming to diſcover the true nature and cauſe of things, ſhe findes, that all things which have a being depend on God, as the Firſt cauſe, and are willingly ſubordinate to him as the End for which they were created: That her ſelf is like a Prodigie in Nature, whom all the other creatures exprobate with this her vile Ingratitude, Treaſon, and Rebellion againſt their Maker. What can ſhe do, having thus proudly condemned her God, and being her ſelf forſaken and deteſted by all other things, but ſeek out a retirement in her ſelf, where her proud thoughts, deſpoiled of that

that falſe Greatneſs they had fancied, feed her continually with Envy, Rancor, and Deſpight, againſt her fellow-creatures and the Deity.

Her caſe (in my opinion) hath ſome reſemblance with that of *Bajazet* King of the *Turks*, he who was overcome and taken priſoner by the great *Tamerlane*. This proud Prince ſaw himſelf maſter of the better part of *Aſia*; and having ſwallowed in his ambitious thoughts the Monarchy of the whole world, had beſieged the *Grecian* Emperor in his Imperial City, which he was upon the point of taking: but in the midſt of all his flattering proſperities, he was envaded by this *Tarmerlane*, who having defeated him in a great Battle, cauſed him to be ſhut up in an Iron-Cage, wherein being incloſed, he expoſed him unto the mockery of all his Army, and uſed him as a Foot-ſtool to tread upon, whenſoever he had an occaſion to get on horſeback. What were the thoughts of this proud Tyrant, who having lately had the diſpoſal of a World of men, and being regarded by them as a Deity, was ſuddenly become the ſcorn of Boys and Lackeys; and having formerly fancied to himſelf the Empire of the world, was forced to ſerve another as his Footſtool? all his paſt Greatneſs, Power, and Proſperities, had now no other being, but in his Memory; where they were always preſent, not to give eaſe to his

afflictions, but to increaſe the anguiſh and trouble of them, by inſpiring him with thoughts of rage and fury againſt God and men, by whom his Expectations had been ſo foully diſappointed.

Such, we may fancy to our ſelves, are the Ravings of this poor ſoul; though with this difference, that *Bajazet* was able to avoid the trouble of them, by daſhing out his brains againſt the Iron-Bars of that his Priſon; whereas this ſoul can never quiet her ſelf from being perſecuted by thoſe ſtings of Conſcience ſhe carries with her as her torturers for all Eternity.

Alas? how imperfect is that apprehenſion we have of the acts which a Soul exerciſeth after her ſeparation from the body, by comparing them unto thoſe we are capable of during this life? He that ſhould eſtimate the motion of the *Primum Mobile*, according to what he ſees performed here by a Snale, would not fall ſhorter in his conception of the rapid Swiftneſs wherewith that Sphere is whirled about this Globe of Earth, than we ſhall do in ours, if we reſemble the affections of Joy and Grief, which we have here during the union with our material bodies, to thoſe a Soul hath when ſhe is ſevered from it: whether we ſhall conſider her huge Activity, when ſhe is purely an immaterial ſubſtance, in compariſon of what ſhe hath when

ſhe

ſhe is clogged with fleſh and blood; or the perfection of her operations, when ſhe beholds clearly the things themſelves in their own natures, without help of thoſe *Idea's*, or imperfect repreſentations of them in our Fancies, which we are forced to uſe during this life; or laſtly, the exemption from time and place, by which our actions here are all reſtrained, but can have no commerce at all with her; who is above the reach of Time, becauſe of her Eternal being; nor can be circumſcribed by Place, as having neither Quantity nor Matter. The affections of Joy and Grief, as they reſide in the Intellectual appetite of man, are but impulſes of our Wills upon our faculties; which carry us on to the enjoying of the one, or ſhunning the other, with more or leſs violence, according to the meaſure of the impreſſion we receive touching the good or evil of them: the force whereof depends upon the active motion of the ſoul; and therein, that of one ſeparated hugely ſurpaſſeth what ſhe hath here, while ſhe is mingled with the maſs of not terreſtrial bodies.

Powder, whereof we have the daily uſe, when it remains united in the maſs whereof it is compoſed, is eaſily reſtrained by the cloſure of a Tun or Barrel; but if it once take fire, will cauſe an Earthquake, and ſhake the frame of Nature, if it be hindred in its courſe

towards the Region of Fire, which is the proper Centre whereunto it tends. The ſoul hath ſome reſemblance unto this: her paſſions or impulſes during her union with the body, are weak and feeble; but being once divided from it, ſhe then hath an activity ſurpaſſing that of Fire, which makes her paſſions or impulſes become ſo ſtrong and violent, that they bear no proportion at all with thoſe which we have here; and enjoying nothing common with them, but their appellation. Their force is alſo very much increaſed, by the clear ſight ſhe hath of things in their own natures, without the help of any *ſpecies* drawn from the things themſelves, or the converſion of her ſelf unto the Phantaſms.

From whence ariſeth the certainty of Knowledge, incompatible with Doubt, or with Opinion (which are the greateſt enemies to Action) ſince no man ever vehemently covets or fears a thing, of whoſe nature he is uncertain. And laſtly, they are beyond meaſure heightned, by the exemption from Time and Place, which ſhe enjoys during her ſtate of ſeparation; whereby ſhe comprehends (after a ſort) all Time and Place within her ſelf. A little time, and a ſmall ſpace, are capable only of little alterations. We are not ſenſible of the falling of one drop of water; whereas in time, it hath the force to pierce the hardeſt Marble. And the Sun-beams, which being

divided into ſundry places, have ſcarce the power to warm us, do (when they are united by a Glaſs) become a fire that burns and ſcorcheth.

What ſhall we ſay then of a Paſſion, which hath ETERNITY, and an Infinity of place, for bounds of its continuance and ſituation? All degrees of Compariſon are here exceeded; and we muſt needs acknowledge, that all the miſeries whereof a man is capable during this life, are a meer nothing, in reſpect of what theſe wretched, wretched ſouls are forced to ſuffer towards the expiation of their crimes, for all Eternity.

What I have here ſet down, hath been to explicate the miſerable ſtate of thoſe unhappy ſouls during Eternity (according to the ordinary courſe of Natural cauſes) who deviating from the true Good, for the enjoyment whereof they were created, have purſued their own vicious inclinations and affections, inſtead thereof. But who is he that can be able to diſcover the Immenſe greatneſs of thoſe Puniſhments which the ſtrict Juſtice of an offended Deity will inflict upon them, for their ingratitude againſt him? Here all expreſſion is dumb; and we muſt needs acknowledge, our hearts are too too narrow to comprehend the vaſt Abyſſes of his Judgments, as well as the overflowing Torrents of his Mercies. Yet ſince Himſelf hath by his only Son ſent down from

heaven, been pleased to communicate something concerning them unto Mankind; I shall with reverence draw near, and without prying curiously into the hidden secrets of them, attempt to take a short imperfect view of the proceedings which the Divine Justice will order to be made against these malefactors, for the condign punishment of their offences.

How deplorable is the condition of these souls, according unto what I have described already; and yet how happy were it, in respect of what it is, were they but left alone, to be tormented only by themselves? For they have scarce begun to make a sad acquaintance with their miseries, when they are suddenly invironed with a multitude of Devils, whose ugly shapes cause an affrightment in them, equal to that of the employment upon which they come; and that is, to convey them unto the dreadful Judgment-seat of God. These Fiends do now begin to glory in the success of their temptations; and whilst they drag them to the place where they are to receive the Sentence of their Condemnation, practise upon them all those barbarous cruelties which an insulting merciless enemy can use against a captivated wretch, delivered over to his rage and fury. They now have executed their Commission; and these poor guilty souls tremble with horrour, to see themselves presented before the dreaded Majesty of him, whom

having formerly rejected for their Advocate, and their Redeemer, they must now submit unto, as Judge of all their actions and departments. Those rays of Glory which streaming from his sacred person, replenish all the Saints and Angels with unspeakable content and pleasure, fill them with an excess of horror and despair, by making them reflect upon the innocence wherein they were created, the happiness for which they were ordained, the base unworthiness of that for love whereof they have cast off the first and forfeited the latter, the prodigious ugliness of those affections wherewith they are now filled instead of them; and lastly, that all this must be proclaimed, and justified against them, before the dreadful Majesty of God in presence of the Saints and Angels, by their own Consciences produced as witnesses against them to their eternal shame and infamy: so that incompassed with a Legion of their tormenting thoughts, as well as Devils, they know not whether of the two hath greater torment, either the expectation of the Sentence, or the execution of it.

And yet that same is wonderfully terrible; for they are thereby banished from the presence of Almighty God, and doomed to live in everlasting Fire, provided for the devil and his angels, from all Eternity. A dismal mansion, whether we shall consider the place it

ſelf, which is a region belching out perpetual flames, and yet covered with an impenetrable darkneſs; or the ſociety of the inhabitants thereof, (who are the Devils, implacable enemies of Humane kind) whoſe malice keeps them perpetually buſied in the invention of new torments, whereby to adde unto the greatneſs of their afflictions; or laſtly, their entertainments whilſt they abide there, which (as the Son of God himſelf informs us) are weeping and gnaſhing of their teeth for all Eternity.

I ſhall not go about to reckon up the ſundry kinds of Puniſhments inflicted there, on ſeveral perſons, according to the nature of their ſeveral Crimes: the ſulphurous Potions which the Drunkard ſhall there be forced to ſwallow down, inſtead of the delicious Wines wherein he placed his greateſt happineſs; the Loathſome food wherewith the Glutton ſhall there be crammed, in lieu of his choice Feaſts, and ſumptuous Banquets; the Scorns, Indignities and Contemps to which the Proud ambitious man ſhall be expoſed, in exchange of that Reſpect and Honor he ſought for here: and all thoſe different kinds of Tortures which the Divine Juſtice diſpenſeth with an admirable order, amid that horror and confuſion, according to the different Crimes whereof theſe ſouls have here, been guilty, thoſe have already been copiouſly decyphered by other ex-

excellent Pens, and cannot be compriſed by me within the compaſs of this ſhort Diſcourſe: nor do I comprehend how theſe material things may (by the ordinary courſe of Nature) work any alteration in the immaterial ſoul, when ſhe is ſeparated from the body: (for I ſpeak nothing of her condition after the Reſurrection, when ſhe ſhall be again united to it:) but I muſt needs conclude her torments far exceed the force of humane underſtanding to conceive, when I conſider the infinite Majeſty of that God, for ſatisfaction of whoſe juſtice they are appointed; the abſolute unlimited power of him by whoſe order they are inflicted; the huge activity of a ſeparated ſoul, by whom they are ſuffered; and the endleſs continuance of ETERNTY, during all which they are to be endured.

We have accompanied theſe miſerable ſouls unto the brink of that Infernal lake, wherein whoever falls is irrecoverable loſt for all Eternity: unhappy perſons! to have at all received a Being, ſince they muſt there exchange the momentary pleaſures they have enioyed in giving ſatisfaction to their own unbridled Appetites, to live in everlaſting flames, tormented by the devils, and the ſting of their own Conſciences, more cruel to them than thoſe helliſh Monſters amongſt whom they are fined by the Divine juſtice, for their puniſhment and our example.

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excellent Pens, and cannot be compriſed by me within the compaſs of this ſhort Diſcourſe: nor do I comprehend how theſe material things may (by the ordinary courſe of Nature) work any alteration in the immaterial ſoul, when ſhe is ſeparated from the body: (for I ſpeak nothing of her condition after the Reſurrection, when ſhe ſhall be again united to it:) but I muſt needs conclude her torments far exceed the force of humane underſtanding to conceive, when I conſider the infinite Majeſty of that God, for ſatisfaction of whoſe juſtice they are appointed; the abſolute unlimited power of him by whoſe order they are inflicted; the huge activity of a ſeparated ſoul, by whom they are ſuffered; and the endleſs continuance of ETERNTY, during all which they are to be endured.

We have accompanied theſe miſerable ſouls unto the brink of that Infernal lake, wherein whoever falls is irrecoverable loſt for all Eternity: unhappy perſons! to have at all received a Being, ſince they muſt there exchange the momentary pleaſures they have enioyed in giving ſatisfaction to their own unbridled Appetites, to live in everlaſting flames, tormented by the devils, and the ſting of their own Conſciences, more cruel to them than thoſe helliſh Monſters amongſt whom they are fined by the Divine juſtice, for their puniſhment and our example.

Let us now alter the Scene, and quitting theſe ſad ſpectacles of horror and affrightment, turn all our thoughts upon the contemplation of a ſoul, who, during life, hath propoſed God unto her ſelf as her cheif good; and entring into a ſerious conſideration of the unſpeakable benefits ſhe hath received from him, in her Creation, in her Redemption, and continual Preſervation, hath (by an act of generous Gratitude) caſt off all thoughts of Luſt, of Vanity, or Pride, whereunto ſhe was inclined by her concupiſcences and affections, to ſacrifice her ſelf entirely unto the performance of his will and pleaſure: the Divine grace (ſeconding theſe good diſpoſitions) hath ſo illuminated her with the reſplendent beams of heavenly light, that ſhe hath been enabled to diſcover ſome little glimpſe of thoſe admirable perfections of her Creator, the ſight whereof hath raviſhed all her powers, ſo that enamoured on his Celeſtial beauty, ſhe hath converſed during her union with the body, only in Heaven; all her thoughts, wiſhes, and affections, being continually preſent there, where ſhe had placed her only treaſure. Death, whoſe grim viſage affrights the moſt couragious ſpirits, is welcome to her; and ſhe doth quit with joy the baſe attire of fleſh, and of corruption, that ſhe may put on immortality. Let us a little conſider the bleſſedneſs of her condition, in this ſtate of ſeparation.

Know-

Knowledge, whoſe object is the true nature and cauſe of things, is ſo hard to be attained unto during this life, that the Philoſophers (who have employed themſelves in the ſearch of it) have, a great part of them, deſpaired of being able to find it out. The *Academicks* (a Sect of them much renowned in ancient time) pronounced boldly, that there was nothing whatſoever could be known. The *Scepticks* (proceeding ſomething more warily) held that no demonſtration could be made; and did therefore continue doubtful, denying their aſſent unto the truth of any Propoſition. And thoſe Philoſophers who (following *Ariſtotle*) have eſtabliſhed in our Schools a form of Learning, do (by a Tyranny they exerciſe over our Reaſon) command us to admit, without proof, ſo many Grounds, or Principles, upon which they eſtabliſh the Doctrine they deliver, that divers of our choiceſt modern Wits have thence taken occaſion to diſpute againſt them, and to endeavor the overthrowing of all that ſtructure they have built upon them.

This inextricable Labyrinth, wherein Truth is ſhut up, being impervious by mortal men cauſed *Socrates* (after all his ſtudy in the ſearch of her) conclude, that he was ignorant of all things elſe, ſave only this, That he knew nothing. And the deſpair of being able to find her out, made *Ariſtotle* throw himſelf headlong into the Ocean, after he had long fought, in vain,

vain, to find the reaſon of its Ebbings and Flowings.

But ſhe, who doth ſo carefully conceal her ſelf from thoſe that live, expoſeth freely all her beauties to be viewed over by this ſeparated ſoul, and fills her with the fulneſs of that knowledge in one inſtant, whoſe ſmalleſt portion we ſcarcely gain, by the continual ſtudy of many Ages. The contemplation whereof is a contentment infinitely ſurpaſſing all thoſe pleaſures which we are capable of during this life. The Queen of *Sheba*, upon the fame only of *Solomon*'s great wiſdom, thought it well worth her labor, to quit the pleaſures of her Court, and expoſing her ſelf unto the trouble, toil, and dangers incident to a long voyage, came from the furtheſt part of all the Eaſt to finde him out, that ſhe might have the ſatisfaction to become a hearer of it. *Alexander* the Great prized at ſo heigh a rate thoſe notions of Philoſophy he had received from *Ariſtotle*, during the time he was his Pupil, that he was uſed to ſay, he had a greater obligation to his Tutor, than to his father *Philip*; and yet he had from him received his Being, and Power ſufficient to make himſelf the wonder of ſucceeding Ages, by reaſon of his glorious Victories and Conqueſts. And *Archimedes* (the great Artiſt) had all his powers & faculties ſo wholly taken up by the contentment he found in ſpeculating of thoſe Demonſtrations

ſtrations he had invented touching the *Symmetry* and proportion of Bodies, that all the rage and fury was practiſed at the taking in of *Syracuſa*, and the deſtruction of thoſe innocent inhabitants which peopled that unlucky City (whereof himſelf was one) could not divert him from the pleaſure of it, or once afford him leaſure to make anſwer to a Souldier who asked his name, with an intention to have preſerved him.

If this ſmall dawn of Knowledge hath appeared unto the eyes of the beholders with ſo glorious a luſtre, as made it preferable before the ſumptuous Magnificences of a ſplendid Court, the glittering brightneſs of a Crown and Scepter, or Life it ſelf: What ſhall we ſay of that exceſs of pleaſure wherewith this ſoul is filled, when ſhe enjoys the fulneſs of all Knowledge, and clearly ſees the cauſes, nature, properties, and qualities of all the workmanſhips of God? when ſhe beholds his admirable wiſdom, power, and providence, exerciſed in the continual upholding of this huge Fabrick? and how from the great contrariety and ſtriſe there is between the parts whereof it is compoſed, he draws the preſervation of the whole, by a perpetual Series of Generation and Corruption? how Death, which ſeems to be ordained for deſtroying the Society of Humane kind, is the main Baſis whereupon it reſts; becauſe the fear thereof with-

withholds vitious persons from falling headlong into the depth of wickedness, and the hope of it animates vertuous men to persist constantly in the rough craggy ways of Good and Vertue! Those rare effects of Nature, that puzzle all our choicest Wits in searching out their hidden causes, are then made easie to her; and she doth plainly understand, whether the Fluxes and Refluxes of the Ocean are guided by the motion of the Moon, or the impulse of that continual wind raised under the *Æquator* by the Sun: Whether that constant inclination of the Loadstone towards the North, whereby we are enabled to make discoveries of the remotest Creeks and Corners of the Sea, is caused by an attractive quality residing in the Poles of the Earth, which being somewhat different from those we fancy in the Heavens, produceth that small variation we observe daily in the Compass, or by those streams of Atomes drawn by the Suns great heat between the Tropicks, which flowing evermore from North to South, and penetrating all the subtil pores whereof the Stone is full, while it remains within the earth in that position, doth in continuance of time beget this property; which we can imitate by often heating of an Iron, and placing it to cool (while yet the pores thereof are opened by the fire) due North and South. Or lastly, Whether that quality, together with the

the power whereby the ſame is by a touch communicated to the Needle, and that whereby it attracts Iron to it ſelf, depend on cauſes whereof as yet Mankind is ignorant; whoſe knowledge is by providence reſerved to the diſcovery of poſterity, in that Age which ſhall ſucceed us, as the experience was to thoſe in that which went before us. Whether the chearful Light, which we ſee darted by the Sun from Eaſt to Weſt, is but a quality communicated by him in an inſtant to all the Air, throughout all the vaſt extent of of our Horizon; or is the Body of the Fire it ſelf, which being the moſt active element, and flowing from the Sun as from its fountain, into the liquid element of Air, prevents by its vaſt diſtance from us, huge expanſion, and active ſwiftneſs, our feeling and our ſight from being ſenſible of any thing which might inform our underſtanding touching the meaſure of its heat and motion. Whether the never-ceaſing turns we have of day and night, proceed from the perpetual motion of all the Heavens, carried about by the great violence of the *Primum Mobile*, or from the motion of the Earth on its own *Axis*, expoſing all the ſeveral parts of it ſucceſſively to be enlightned by the Sun. Whether the Planets are fixed each of them in a ſeveral Sphere, whoſe motion doth direct their Courſes; or (which ſome think they can demonſtrate of the Sun) move

all

all of them (except the Moon) upon their ſeveral *Axes*, like the Earth. How far their different Influences and Aſpects govern all Sublunary bodies, cauſing the births and periods of States and Monarchies, and the particular happineſs and miſery of private men.

But above all, ſhe is entirely ſatisfied with ſeeing how the Infallibility of Gods preſcience infringeth not the liberty of mans free-will: How nothing here below happens by chance, but that his Providence, diſpoſing ſweetly all thoſe things which he hath wrought, permits the miſeries of good, and the proſperities of wicked men, for the advantage of his ſervice, by exerciſing and inſtructing of the one, and by reclaiming of the other. And how, in fine, by the inſcrutable *Meanders* of his Judgments, he ordereth ſo, that all the villany and wickedneſs is practiſed here, co-operates unto the good of his Elect, and the increaſe of his own glory.

In theſe employments ſhe might with joy ſpend an infinity of time, were ſhe not taken off by others, of much more delight and conſequence: for ſhe no ſooner leaves Times region, and comes upon the confines of Eternity, but ſhe's attended by a Troop of Angels appointed to convoy her unto the glorious Court of her Creator; and ſhe receives by them an Invitation is ſent unto her by God

God himſelf, like unto that we read of in the *Canticles: Jam hyems tranſit, imber abiit & receſſit; ſurge amica mea, & veni.* My friend! the winter of thy chilling cares and fears is paſt, the ſhowers of all thy tears are now blown over; ariſe therefore, and mount up unto the ever-bleſſed dwelling of Eternity. Who can expreſs thoſe extaſies of joy this Summons cauſeth? or fancy to himſelf the leaſt *Idea* of thoſe pleaſing raptures wherewith ſhe is poſſeſſed, when ſhe beholds the beauties of the Imperial heaven, which now ſtands open to receive her?

Thoſe holy Saints, and pious men, who have endeavored to inflame us with the love of Vertue, by hope of the reward to come, accommodating their expreſſions to our conceits, deſcribe it to us like a ſpacious City built all of gold and precious ſtones; whoſe gates are each of them compoſed of one entire Pearl; whoſe walls are made not for defence, but ornament, becauſe her enemies are all deſtroyed, and ſhe eſtabliſhed in ſecurity, above the reach of Time or Fortune; whoſe houſes are of Jaſper and Porphyry, inlaid with Rubies, Diamonds, and Carbuncles; were Gold and poliſhed Marble are not employed but for the meaneſt uſes; every of whoſe inhabitants is a great King, and hath dominion over all the works of Nature; a beauty that outſhines the Sun in greateſt

height

height of all his glory; an activity surpassing that of Lightning, accompanied with youth and health, which never shall decay for all Eternity: within the circuit of those walls they represent unto us a large field, beautified with all the choice variety of flowers that can be thought on, whose fragrant smell sends forth a most delicious Perfume to the Senses; in midst whereof, passeth a purling stream of living water, which whoso tastes, shall never thirst for all Eternity; where a continual Spring preserves all Plants in the full freshness of their prime and verdure: where an eternal day suffers not the least eclipse of night or darkness: there all the blessed dwellers in this heavenly country do entertain each other in perfect love and concord, with fullness of all joys and pleasures; whose compleat happiness can never be disturbed by the unwelcome presence of an enemy, or the sad parting of a friend.

What a meer Nothing are all the flattering shadows of Content we grasp at during life, being compared to those of this Celestial mansion which I have here described? And yet these are the outside only of their joys, not to be prized at all, if once compared to that wherein consists the essence of their perfect bliss and happiness. Gold, Marble, Precious Stones, fair Fields, cool Springs, the company of Saints and Angels, Soveraign power,

power, Beauty, Activity, Youth, Health, Impassibility, and Immortality it self, can never satisfie the immaterial soul, without the vision of her Lord and Maker: this is the centre whereunto she tends, the object of her powers and faculties. This being once obtained, brings with it full repose and quietness; which all created things can never do: and this is here communicated freely to her, whereby her understanding is fully satisfied with the clear knowledge of all things, by sight of him, who is both the first cause, and truth it self: her Will findes also here whatever object it desireth, in the secure possession of all good things, which are united in his nature, who is Good it self.

Who can describe the infinite advantages, prerogatives, and dignities, that do accompany this blessed vision? Words are to feeble to express, and humane hearts (though ne'r so large) are too too narrow to conceive them.

Let us conclude, that as that man who doth partake of wisdom is truly wise, and who hath courage becometh valiant: even so this blessed soul, being ingulph'd in contemplation of the Deity, by the strict union which that causeth of all her faculties to him, is in some sort a God; enjoying all perfections by participation, which God himself himself hath by propriety.

The CONCLUSION.

READER!

HAving finiſhed theſe two firſt Heads of this Diſcourſe; to wit, A deſcription of what ETERNITY is, and what our condition will be when we ſhall come to be partakers of it; there remained in the laſt place, that I ſhould, according to my promiſe, have ſet down ſuch Rules for conduct of our Lives, whilſt we are here, as might (being obſerved) render us pefectly happy, when we ſhould come to be inhabitants in that our country.

Theſe Rules I meant ſhould have compriſed within them all the Vertues; which may be well reduced unto two Heads, that is to ſay, thoſe which have for their object the Divinity it ſelf, and thoſe that ſerve for the well ordering and diſpoſing of our actions.

The principal ones of the firſt kind, are thoſe we call the Theological vertues; Faith, Hope, and Charity: whereof the firſt breeds in us a perfect reſignation of our underſtandings unto God, by aſſenting with humility and conſtancy, without doubt or heſitation, unto thoſe Truths which he hath pleaſed to reveal to us, for the ſalvation of our ſouls.

The

The ſecond makes us with patience and perſeverance continue in the Way of Vertue, exſpecting to be made partakers of all thoſe bleſſings he hath promiſed to his ſervants. And the third cauſeth an entire union of our Will with his; which is the greateſt height of Chriſtian perfection, and the aſſured means to attain unto an everlaſting Bliſs.

Among thoſe of the ſecond kind (being the Moral vertues) the chiefeſt are, Prudence, Juſtice, Fortitude, and Temperance, (commonly called the *Cardinal Vertues*) which ſerve for the well-ordering and diſpoſing of all the faculties, paſſions and affections of our ſouls. Prudence, which ought to preſide in all the conſultations of our Underſtanding: Juſtice, to govern all the reſolutions of our Will: Fortitude, to keep in due ſubjection the paſſions compriſed under the general notion of the Iraſcible part of man: and Temperance, to bridle the exorbitance of our Concupiſcences aed affections.

I had intended to have deſcribed at large the nature and the qualities of all theſe Vertues; and to have ſhewed how all the other may be deduced out of theſe Seven, by reaſon of the connexion and relation they have unto each other. And I had meant, in the contexture of that Diſcourſe, to have ſet down the way and means to purge our ſouls from all the depraved inclinations and habits

which are oppoſite unto them; that being thereby cleanſed from the ruſt and filth of ſin, they might become capable ſubjects of being illuminated by the divine grace, and be enabled to diſcover his admirable goodneſs and perfections; whereon being enamoured, they might by fervent acts of Charity unite their Wills entirely unto his, and thereby mount unto the top of Chriſtian perfection, which is the aſſured means of being happy in Eternity.

I ſay I had intended: for (although I had ſpent ſome time in the digeſting and ordering of this matter, yet) I was put unto a ſtand in that deſign, by a reflexion which I chanced to make upon a Saying of that glorious Saint, and Doctor in the Church of God, St. *Cyprian*, who writing unto ſome of the *Ethnicks* touching the Lives and Studies of the *Chriſtians*, ſpeaks thus: *Philoſophi factis non verbis ſumus; nec magna loquimur, ſed vivimus:* that is, We are Philoſophers in our actions, not in our words; nor do we ſpeak great things, but practiſe them. It ſeems this holy man thought it much fitter for a Chriſtian to exerciſe himſelf in vertuous actions, than in deſcribing the nature of the Vertues.

Now this opinion of ſo grave and reverend a Father of the Church having at firſt cauſed me to doubt whether I ſhould proceed to perfecting the Work I had in hand; I took a reſolution,

ſolution, ſome time after, to give it over, upon the reading of a paſſage reported by ſome Writers in the Life of *Origen*, (that Prodigy of Wit and Learning:) they ſet down, that being in his old-age ſenſible of divers errors he had run into, (which made his followers be condemned as Hereticks) he came into the Church, with an intention to expound ſome paſſage out of the Scripture, for the inſtruction of the people; and to that purpoſe opening the Book, he chanced to light upon a paſſage in the Pſalms of *David*, wherein the holy Prophet ſpeaking of God, ſaith thus: *Peccatori dixit, Quare tu enarras gloriam meam, & aſſumis teſtamentum meum in os tuum?* In Engliſh thus: He (meaning God) ſaid unto the ſinner, Wherefore doſt thou ſhew forth my glory, and doſt aſſume my Teſtament into thy mouth? The penitent old man taking this reproof as ſpoken unto himſelf, burſt forth into a flood of tears, which took from him the uſe of ſpeech; and retiring out of the Church, abandoned all the thoughts of teaching others, that he might ſpend the ſhort remainder of his life in the reforming of himſelf.

The Reaſons which prevailed with this great Doctor, have wrought the ſame effect with me; and I reſolved to quit the farther buſying of my ſelf in an employment, wherein I was forbidden to meddle by reaſon of

my sins, and which I was unable to perform, because I am a stranger to the practise of those Vertues I should write of; and so might justly fear that inconvenience would thereby happen, whereof we are forewarned by our blessed Saviour in the Gospel, to wit, that if the blind shall lead the blind, they both will fall together in the pit.

Here therefore I give end to this Discourse, with this Advertisement only unto the pious Reader, That if he shall desire to have his heart enflamed with the divine love, he must first necessarily cleanse it from all affections unto fading and transitory things.

Suetonius, in the Lives of the Twelve first *Cæsars*, relates, that when the body of the Emperor *Titus* was placed in the Funeral pile, to be consumed with fire (according to the custom of those times) his heart (after his body was reduced to ashes) did many times spring out of the flames; and being at last opened by those, who wondred at the strangeness of the accident, it was found to be full of Poyson, which hindred the operation of the fire upon it. Even so our souls, while they continue fraught with the inordinate love of Earthly things, (which are the mortal poyson of the soul) resist the inspiration of the holy Spirit, and suffer not themselves to be enflamed by the Celestial fire of Charity, which

which he doth never fail to kindle in those hearts are fitted to receive it.

The readiest way for the devout Reader to effect this, is wholly to employ his thoughts and studies in the continual meditation upon Eternity; wherein if he be farthered by any thing which I have here set down, I then desire, that, as I have made him partaker of my Meditations, so he would also make me partaker with him in his Prayers.

FINIS.